LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended)   A method for processing customer forecasted demands for direct material, the method comprising:

electronically receiving customer forecasted demands for procurement of direct material to be used for production of products in accordance with the customer forecasted demands by a supply chain server from at least one customer;

electronically analyzing by the supply chain server the customer forecasted demands to determine whether the customer forecasted demands are valid, wherein said step of analyzing includes determining ~~compliance with contractual terms, completeness, accuracy, adherence to previous forecasts, adherence to previous buying patterns, and requests within agreed to capacities~~ whether the customer forecasted demands represent a known customer, whether the customer forecasted demands comply with contractual terms, whether the customer forecasted demands are complete, whether the customer forecasted demands are accurate, whether the customer forecasted demands adhere to previous forecasts, whether the customer forecasted demands adhere to previous buying patterns, and whether the customer forecasted demands represent requests within agreed-to capacities, and

wherein the step of analyzing further includes at least one of identifying major shifts relative to previous weeks' forecasts, identifying major cumulative shifts in buying patterns, identifying requests outside of agreed upon capacities, and identifying supply and demand requirements relative to at least one of a start-up, an end-of-run and a plant shutdown; and

electronically sending by the supply chain server the customer forecasted demands to at least one supplier when the customer forecasted demands are determined to be valid.

2. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the receiving the customer forecasted demands further includes extrapolating the customer forecasted demands based on expected demands by the at least one customer.

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3. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the extrapolating is based on historical data of the customer forecasted demands.

4. (original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the extrapolating is based on information supplied by the customer.

5. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising requiring the supplier to follow a production protocol in light of the sending.

6. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising requiring the supplier to follow an inventory protocol in light of the sending.

7. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising sending an exception notice to the customer when the customer forecasted demands are not valid.

8. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands are received by a supply chain server and wherein the analyzing includes checking at least one of: the credit of the customer, whether the customer forecasted demands comprise a complete forecast, whether all information is complete and accurate, whether the customer has a contract with the supply chain server, and whether a part number associated with the customer forecasted demands is included in the contract between the supply chain server and the customer.

9. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to demands for a plurality of time periods from the at least one customer.

10. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
    accumulating the customer forecasted demands thereby producing an accumulated forecast; and

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sending the accumulated customer-forecasted demands to the at least one supplier when the customer forecasted demands are valid.

11. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the customer forecasted demands come from a plurality of customers.

12. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands are in a format determined by the customer.

13. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 12, further comprising converting the customer forecasted demands into a different format.

14. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the customer forecasted demands are received in one of an email, a spreadsheet, and an XML format.

15. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to products.

16. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to services.

17. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to bandwidth in a network.

18. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to airline tickets.

19. (previously presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising sending an abort code to the customer, the abort code enabling the customer to abort an order relating to one of the customer forecasted demands.

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20. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising canceling an order corresponding to one of the customer forecasted demands if the customer sends the abort code.

21. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising sending products corresponding to the customer forecasted demands from the supplier to the customer.

22. (original) The method as recited in claim 21, further comprising providing tracking information relating to the products, to at least one of the customer and the supplier.

23. (original) The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the tracking information is provided by producing a web site accessible by at least one of the customer and the supplier.

24. (original) The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the tracking information includes information relating to potential bottlenecks between the supplier and the customer.

25. (original) The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the bottlenecks include customs.

26. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising
electronically receiving a return request by the at least one customer for a particular product;
electronically monitoring the returning of the particular product to a corresponding supplier; and
determining whether the customer desires a replacement product; wherein
the step of receiving is performed by said supply chain server in a supply chain network.

27. (original) The method as recited in claim 26, further comprising determining whether the replacement product is available from at least one of the suppliers in the supply chain network.

28. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 27, further comprising adjusting the customer forecasted demands when the replacement product is not available from the suppliers in the supply chain network.

Claims 29-69 (canceled).

70. (currently amended) A system for processing customer forecasted demands, the system comprising:

a supply chain server coupled to at least one customer and at least one supplier, the supply chain server including a messaging services system and an ERP system; wherein:

the messaging services system electronically receives customer forecasted demands for procurement of direct material to be used for production of products in accordance with the customer forecasted demands from the at least one customer;

the ERP system electronically analyzes the customer forecasted demands received by the messaging services system to determine whether the customer forecasted demands are valid, by determining ~~compliance with contractual terms, completeness, accuracy, adherence to previous forecasts, adherence to previous buying patterns, and requests within agreed-to capacities~~ whether the customer forecasted demands represent a known customer, whether the customer forecasted demands comply with contractual terms, whether the customer forecasted demands are complete, whether the customer forecasted demands are accurate, whether the customer forecasted demands adhere to previous forecasts, whether the customer forecasted demands adhere to previous buying patterns, and whether the customer forecasted demands represent requests within agreed-to capacities, and

by at least one of identifying major shifts relative to previous weeks' forecasts, identifying major cumulative shifts in buying patterns, identifying requests outside of agreed upon capacities, and identifying supply and demand requirements relative to at least one of a

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start-up, an end-of-run and a plant shutdown; and

the messaging system electronically sends the customer forecasted demands to the at least one supplier when the customer forecasted demands are determined to be valid.

71. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the ERP system further extrapolates the customer forecasted demands based on expected demands by the customer.

72. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 71, wherein the ERP system extrapolates the customer forecasted demands based on historical data of the forecasted demands.

73. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 71, wherein the ERP system extrapolates the customer forecasted demands based on information supplied by the customer.

74. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, further comprising a contractual agreement requiring the supplier to follow a production protocol in light of the customer forecasted demands sent by the messaging services system.

75. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, further comprising a contractual agreement requiring the supplier to follow an inventory protocol in light of the customer forecasted demands sent by the messaging services system.

76. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the messaging services system sends an exception notice to the customer when the ERP system determines that the customer forecasted demands are not valid.

77. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the ERP system analyzes the customer forecasted demands by checking at least one of: the credit of the customer, whether the customer forecasted demands comprise a complete forecast, whether all information

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is complete and accurate, whether the customer has a contract with the supply chain server, and whether a part number associated with the customer forecasted demands are included in the contract between the supply chain server and the customer.

78. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to demands for a plurality of time periods from the at least one customer.

79. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein:

the ERP system further accumulates the customer forecasted demands thereby producing an accumulated forecast; and

the messaging services system sends the accumulated customer forecasted demands to at least one of the suppliers when the customer forecasted demands are valid.

80. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 79, wherein the accumulated customer forecasted demands come from a plurality of customers.

81. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the customer forecasted demands are in a format determined by the customer.

82. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 81, wherein the messaging services system further converts the customer forecasted demands into a different format.

83. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 81, wherein the customer forecasted demands are received in one of an EDI, an email, a spreadsheet, and an XML format.

84. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to products.

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85. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to services.

86. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to bandwidth in a network.

87. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the customer forecasted demands relate to airline tickets.

88. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein the messaging system further sends an abort code to the customer, the abort code enabling the customer to abort an order relating to one of the customer forecasted demands.

89. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 88, wherein the ERP system further cancels an order corresponding to one of the customer forecasted demands upon receiving an abort code from the customer.

90. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein:
the supply chain server is further connected to at least one logistics provider; and
the ERP system further sends a command to the logistics provider so that the logistics provider transfers products corresponding to the customer forecasted demands from the supplier to the customer in response to orders from the supply chain server.

91.   (original) The system as recited in claim 90, wherein the supply chain server further comprises an extranet manager, the extranet manager providing tracking information relating to the products.

92. (original) The system as claimed in claim 91, wherein the extranet manager provides the tracking information by producing a web site accessible by at least one of the customer and the supplier.

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93. (original) The system as recited in claim 91, wherein the tracking information includes information regarding the status of the product through potential bottlenecks between the supplier and the customer.

94. (original) The system as recited in claim 93, wherein the bottlenecks include customs.

95. (original) The system as recited in claim 70, wherein:

the supply chain server is further coupled to a logistics provider;

the messaging services system receives a return request by the at least one customer for a particular product;

the ERP system controls the logistics provider to return the particular product to a corresponding supplier; and

the ERP system determines whether the customer desires a replacement product.

96. (original) The system as recited in claim 95, wherein the ERP system further determines whether the replacement product is available from suppliers in the system.

97. (previously presented) The system as recited in claim 96, wherein the ERP system further adjusts the customer forecasted demands when the replacement product is not available from suppliers in the system.

Claims 98-132 (canceled).

133. (currently amended) A method for processing customer forecasted demands for direct material, the method comprising:

electronically receiving customer forecasted demands for procurement of direct material to be used for production of products in accordance with the customer forecasted demands by a supply chain server from at least one customer;

electronically converting the customer forecasted demands from a first data format to a

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second data format;

electronically analyzing by the supply chain server the converted customer forecasted demands to determine whether the converted customer forecasted demands are valid, wherein the step of analyzing includes determining ~~at least one~~ of whether the converted customer forecasted demands represent a known customer, whether the converted customer forecasted demands comply with contractual terms, whether the converted customer forecasted demands are complete, whether the converted customer forecasted demands are accurate, whether the converted customer forecasted demands adhere to previous forecasts, whether the converted customer forecasted demands adhere to previous buying patterns, and whether the converted customer forecasted demands represent requests within agreed-to capacities, and wherein the step of analyzing further includes at least one of identifying major shifts relative to previous weeks' forecasts, identifying major cumulative shifts in buying patterns, identifying requests outside of agreed upon capacities, and identifying supply and demand requirements relative to at least one of a start-up, an end-of-run and a plant shutdown;

electronically determining whether each respective customer represented in each customer's respective converted forecasted demand has an approved credit standing after each customer's respective converted forecasted demands are determined to be valid;

electronically transmitting an error notification to any customer associated with a converted forecasted demand determined not to be valid or any customer determined not to have an approved credit standing; and

electronically sending by the supply chain server the valid converted customer forecasted demands to at least one supplier for each customer determined to have an approved credit standing.

134. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the direct ~~materials are~~ material is used repeatedly for manufacture, ~~comprise~~ comprises high-dollar values, ~~are~~ is reported as at least one of raw materials and work-in-progress on quarterly balance sheets, and ~~generate~~ generates demand fluctuations each product cycle due to variations in demand and production bottlenecks.

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135. (currently amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 70, wherein the direct ~~materials~~ ~~are~~ material is used repeatedly for manufacture, ~~comprise~~ comprises high-dollar values, ~~are~~ is reported as at least one of raw materials and work-in-progress on quarterly balance sheets, and ~~generate~~ generates demand fluctuations each product cycle due to variations in demand and production bottlenecks.

136. (new) The method of claim 133, wherein the direct material is used repeatedly for manufacture, comprise high-dollar values, are reported as at least one of raw materials and work-in-progress on quarterly balance sheets, and generate demand fluctuations each product cycle due to variations in demand and production bottlenecks.

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